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www.health.ri.gov

Interim Health Advisory - Updated

Date: May 11, 2009
To: Rhode Islanders
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Re: Mass Gatherings & H1N1 Virus

Official Recommendations

CDC Guidance for Public Gatherings in Response to Human Infections with Novel Influenza A (H1N1). Link: http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/public_gatherings.htm

The CDC's guidance refers to an assembly or grouping of people in one place either indoors or outdoors. Such gatherings can include commencement exercises, graduations, church services, sporting events, circus, conference, and other similar activities attended by relatively large groups of people.

In order to reduce the spread of H1N1 infection in public settings, the following recommendations should apply:

- If you are ill (fever and cough or sore throat), stay home.
- Persons who are at high risk of complications from H1N1 infection (persons with chronic medical conditions, children younger than 5 years of age, anyone age 65 or older and pregnant women) should consider the risk of exposure to H1N1 if they attend public gatherings.
- All persons should be reminded to:
 - Wash your hands often with soap and warm water. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand gel.
 - Cough and sneeze into your elbow.
 - Limit personal contact (like handshaking and hugging).
- Masks and respirators are NOT recommended for non-healthcare settings.

Event organizers should communicate that attendees should remain home if they are ill and to use good hygiene practices while at the event. Other measures can be used by the event organizer depending on the type and setting of the event including:

- Make hand washing stations available.
- Make hand sanitizers and tissues available.
- Provide on-site medical assessment.
- Provide alternative options and venues for participation (e.g., remote Web-based viewing stations).

Resources

CDC H1N1 Influenza Site: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu>
Rhode Island Department of Health Swine Influenza Site:
<http://www.health.ri.gov/pandemicinfluenza/swineinfluenza/swineinfluenza.php>
WHO Swine Influenza Site: <http://www.who.int/en/>